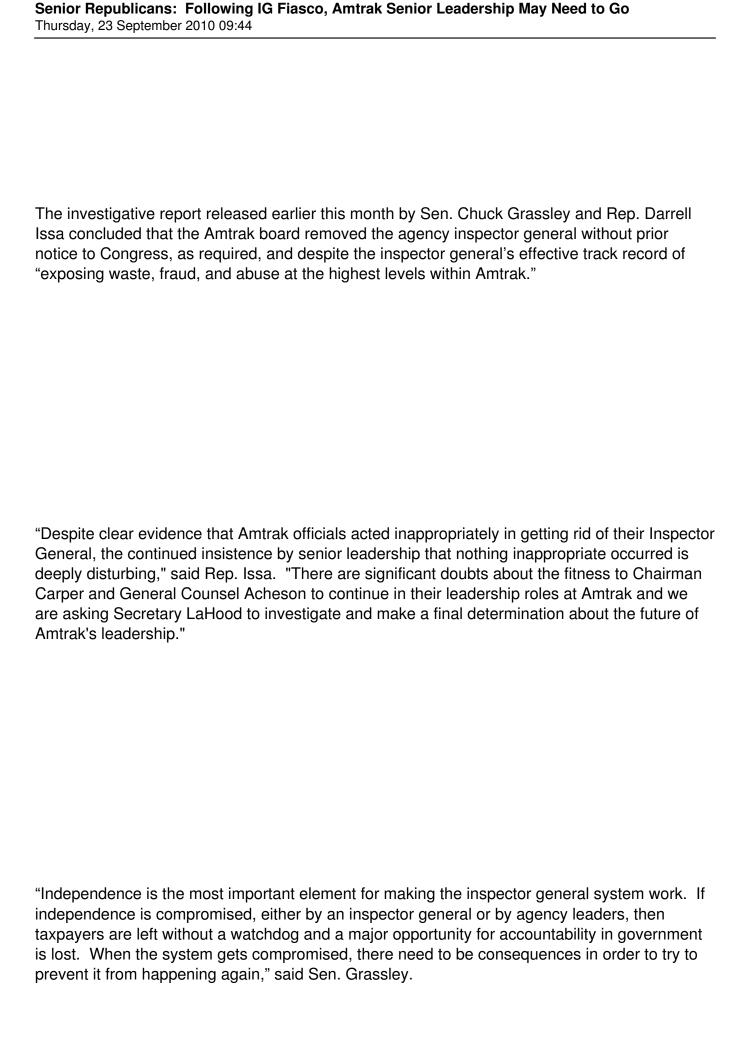
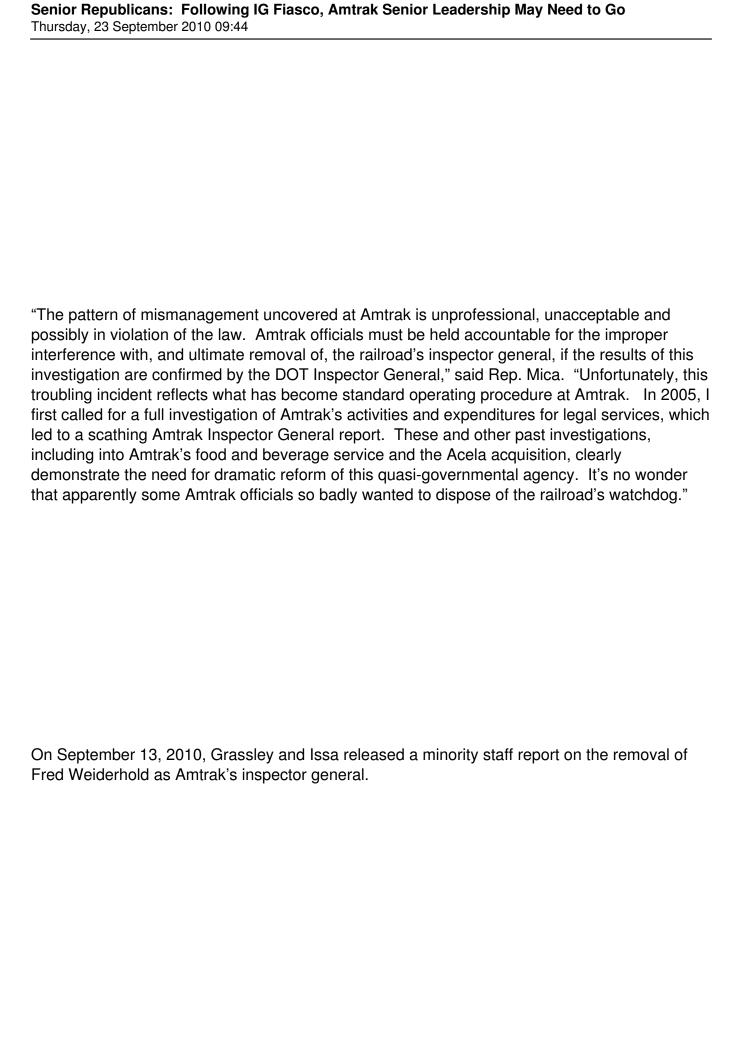
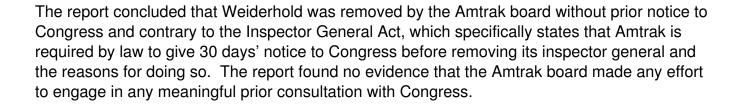


The letter was sent by Sen. Chuck Grassley, the Ranking Member on the Senate Finance Committee; Rep. Darrell Issa, the top Republican on the House's primary investigative committee, the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform; and the Ranking Member for the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure Rep. John Mica.

In the letter, sent today to Secretary LaHood, the lawmakers wrote that the Congressional investigation "found that Amtrak Chairman Thomas Carper and Amtrak General Counsel (GC) Eleanor Acheson unlawfully interfered with the independence of the OIG and removed Mr. Weiderhold from his post as IG in violation of the provisions of the Inspector General Act of 1978 (IG Act). The unlawful actions of Chairman Carper and GC Acheson impeded the effectiveness of Amtrak's OIG to such an extent that we intend to ask for their removal pending an independent investigation by the Inspector General for the U.S. Department of Transportation."







In their letter, Reps. Issa, Mica and Sen. Grassley make it clear to Secretary LaHood that Amtrak's actions must be dealt with in a serious manner. They wrote, "It is our belief that the findings of the Joint Committee's investigation are sufficient to warrant the removal of Chairman Carper and GC Acheson. We request that you initiate an independent review of this matter so that we can be confident responsible management is in place at Amtrak."

Inspectors General were created by Congress to be the first line of defense against waste, fraud and abuse, and as the lawmakers observed, "Congress has an obligation to protect the independence and effectiveness of every Inspector General from impairment by agency management. When agency management interferes with OIG independence to the extent that the protections put in place by Congress through the IG Act are effectively eradicated, there is no remedy but termination of those responsible. In the case of Amtrak, those responsible are Chairman Carper and GC Acheson."